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C!N
The Stranded

Carey Handles SCI FI Virgin's First

When the SCI FI Network and Virgin Comics first announced their joint venture last year, it was obvious that they had big things in the works. But who would they draft to helm their first comic book effort? Who could come up with a concept so strong that it had a shot at success both in print and on television?

Both companies knew the answer: *Mike Carey. A* veteran writer with credentials that include Marvel, DC, Vertigo, Dynamite, and Minx, among others—is the creator of Vertigo's premiere series, ***The Stranded.*** And not only is his series currently available as a comic book that's scheduled for trade paperback in July, but it's also slated for television, with a pilot episode in development for SCI FI .

Gotham Chopra, Chief Creative Officer & Editor-In-Chief for Virgin, explained how the joint venture came about. "The partnership between SCI FI and Virgin really was an organic evolution of our mutual admiration of one another. We've long been big fans of some of their most iconic shows, from ***Battlestar Galactica*** to ***Eureka;*** when we started talking to various of their executives, we were thrilled to hear that they were comic fans.

"From a business standpoint, everyone recognized that their is a just a tremendous pool of talent in the comic industry without much of a focus these days in the SF genre. The more we talked, the more we realized that this would be a great partnership and a fun way to potentially incubate future television franchises for the network. The first few ideas cam pretty fast once we had formalized or partnership. Both parties reached out respectively to their communities of creators, and *Mike Carey's* concept for ***The Stranded*** was the first idea that stuck."

While horror has met with great success in comics, science fiction has found the path more rocky—but Carey is confident that the time is right for high-profile science fiction comics. "It's true that sci-fi comics have sometimes struggled to find an audience, at least in the American mainstream," Carey said. "In the UK, of course, one of our longest running comics is the aggressively sci-fi oriented ***2000AD***. I think it has to do with expectations and conventions again—and by conventions, I mean how things are framed for an audience. When you stop and think about it, superhero comics *are* SF, for the most part. Look at the Fantastic Four, for example: you've got alternate dimensions, time travel, alien races, spectacularly advanced gadgetry of all kinds, sub-microscopic worlds, lost cities and races... It's hard to think of a science fiction trope that *hasn't* shown up in FF at some time or other.

" What we're finding now, I think, is that the boundaries between genres are becoming more porous. Superheroes are becoming acceptable and popular in other media—on TV and in the movies—where in the past they've struggled to escape from a kind of camped-up ghetto. And at the same time, comics audiences are becoming more receptive to material that might have been confined to a niche market twenty years ago."

How did the always-busy Carey find time in his schedule to tackle assignments for Virgin Comics? "The short answer to that would be: *Mackenzie Cadenhead*! I already knew Mac from when she was an editor at Marvel," Carey told ***CSN.*** "She edited me on ***Ultimate Elektra*** and on ***Spellbinders***. So when she moved across to Virgin, we stayed in touch and in due course she invited me to pitch for some Virgin books. ***Voodoo Child*** was the first, and then that opened the door for a lot of others. It was—and still is—a time of huge expansion and innovation at Virgin, so there were lot of new projects being launched in a lot of different areas. It's been an exhilarating time."

How did ***Stranded,*** Carey's kickoff series for the SCI FI Virgin line, come about? "It was an original concept that Virgin and SCI FI took on board and developed,"Carey said. "It was a very collaborative process, and I think we were all really excited with the end result. It could have been a very negative experience, having so many different hands on the tiller when the project was just getting going, but in fact everyone who was involved was just really into it and really good at fine-tuning the idea without shutting down the possibilities. It was - unexpectedly - a lot of fun."

As Carey explained, ***Stranded*** focuses on "several ordinary people who learn that they're 'sleepers'—that they've been embedded within families and jobs and situations, with their memories and the memories of the people around them altered so that they'll seem to *belong*, to have a certain identity. But wherever they've come from, they've been followed: someone knows who they really are and is murdering them one by one.

"However, they've got a guardian angel—a woman named Tamree who is looking out for them without ever letting herself be seen by them. But now, in this crisis, she pops up, snaps her fingers and says 'remember.' She gives them their *real* memories back—along with superhuman powers that they seem to have been given by some scientific process—and immediately steals their new lives from them."

The focal characters are "a core group of four Stranded," Carey explained. " There's Tamree, who's a telepath; Drum, who can create force fields but can only keep them intact for a few seconds at a time; Cullen, who's a mirror, able to absorb skills and personality traits from the people around him; And Sisera, who can accelerate entropy so that things disintegrate, fall apart, explode or just plain die all around her.

"Their main enemy in the initial story arc is Janus, a ruthless killer who's been set to hunt them down. Janus has a very bizarre set of powers himself: his body is infected with artificial micro-organisms called anbiotes. They come in two flavors, negative and positive: the negative anbiotes are constantly devouring Janus from the inside, and the positive ones are constantly rebuilding him again on a cellular level. So he heals almost instantly from any wound, but he also has a death touch: if he touches someone with his left hand, he can infect them with negative anbiotes which devour their insides and just leave a brittle shell. Janus is assisted by a creature named Dzin: Dzin is telepathic, like Tamree, and turns out to be connected to Tamree in other ways, too."

Did Carey initially envision ***The Stranded*** as a comic, a television project, or both? "Well we knew the possibility was there—and one of the things that SCI FI was doing was saying 'bearing in mind that this *might* become a TV series, you might want to consider X, Y and Z.' They weren't being prescriptive, because of course any TV version of the story could still be different from the comic, but we were in a dialogue the whole time about the two different media and what would work better in each.

"That was fascinating in itself, because it makes you realize how many things that are conventional in comics—conventional to the point of being invisible—work differently in film and TV. One example is when Tamree 'spirit-walks'—projects her mind and consciousness outside of her body. In the comic, we use the age-old device of having a ghost version of her detach itself from her real body and go wandering—a la Doctor Strange. But on TV the most natural way to do that would be with a POV shot—having the moving camera view become Tamree's mobile consciousness, as though we're looking out of her eyes."

How deeply involved is Carey in the television pilot? "At the moment I'm right in the thick of it, and having a great time. The pilot will *definitely* have a lot of echoes from the initial miniseries, but it will introduce some new characters and it will frame some things differently. Again, it's a case of horses-for-courses: there are issues of pacing and structure that just have to be handled differently on TV. Every medium opens up its own possibilities - has its own toybox."

Will every SCI FI Virgin project make the jump to television? "To some degree that's the hope and the mission," Chopra replied. "That being said, our real focus first and foremost is to create great comic series that hopefully have the legs and potential to live on television eventually. One of the great assets of this partnership is that we have creative executives from both parties on the ground floor editorially, guiding writers and artists on the various stories. To that effect, both Virgin and SCI FI are creatively and emotionally invested from the start. So by the time that third or fourth issue comes around, everyone is already getting excited about the potential TV series to be developed."

What else is is in the works? "We've been looking at a lot of different ideas and pitches," Chopra said, "but *Mike Carey* has really set the bar in terms of quality with ***The Stranded***, which is now evolving on the TV path. We do have a few different ideas developing that I think have tremendous potential. The one that we have announced that is moving forward first is ***Superbia***, a satirical chronicle of a superhero suburb where super secrets run deep."

The Stranded, a five-issue limited series, is currently available from Virgin Comics; a collected edition is forthcoming in mid-July.

by Cliff Biggers

Courtesy your friendly neighborhood comics outlet!

Comic Shop Newsarama

Produced by Comic Shop News in cooperation with Matt Brady and newsarama.com

GI Joe Joins the Ranks at IDW

Several weeks ago, *CSN* told you that it was likely to happen—and now it has! IDW has confirmed that they have landed the ***G.I. Joe*** license, with plans to unveil their line of ***Joe*** comics in October. This will be the fourth publisher for the action-figure-inspired comic, which had a successful run at Marvel, a brief stint at Dark Horse, and a recent tenure at Devil's Due.

"This probably was one of the worst-kept secrets in comics," IDW's *Chris Ryall* joked with ***Comic Shop Newsarama's*** *Matt Brady*. "Or at least the most-unconfirmed-rumored bits of news, anyway. As soon as word went out that Devil's Due would no longer be doing Joe comics, many people naturally assumed we'd jump in on this, due to our association with Hasbro's ***Transformers***.

"We started talking seriously at the start of '08 or so—I forget the exact timeline since the timing of all of this. We met with Hasbro and presented our plans, and then from there, the business side back-and-forth takes over for a few months."

How will IDW approach the ***Joe*** license? "We'll take a similar approach to what we did with ***Transformers***, with the movie continuity being its own animal," Ryall said, adding that it was "likely that some comics will spin out of the movie as well."

Now that IDW has Hasbro's Big Two, is it possible readers will see another ***G.I. Joe/Transformers*** crossover series? "You know, when we first started the ***Transformers*** books, we had the rights to do a crossover and I had some ideas about doing that, but held off since there were an array of others already out there," Ryall said. "So right now, I don't really have any interest in doing those. I do think there's a good way to do a new one but I'm much more interested in establishing Joe comics for the foreseeable future."

The agreement also gives IDW reprint rights; what stories does the company plan to include in its reprint line? "Aaaaall of 'em, including some old comics that have never been collected in traditional comic-book form, which will be explained more thoroughly later on," Ryall said. " I especially want to get all the hard-to-find Marvel material offered up in attractive new formats. And we have some plans to update some of those stories in ways that will make long-time fans very happy."

While Ryall didn't go into specifics regarding his creative teams, he did confirm the involvement of one ***Joe*** veteran. "It wouldn't be ***G.I. Joe*** without Larry Hama's involvement," he said.

What's the secret to ***G.I. Joe's*** success, as Ryall sees it? " It's the characters, like with any property, no matter when it started. Doctor Who, James Bond, Spider-Man, Maxwell Smart, James T. Kirk... all of these characters have legions of fans because people love and respond to the characters. ***G.I. Joe*** is the same thing, no matter what era they appear in."

Look for more news on IDW's ***Joe*** comics in upcoming issues of ***CSN***.

CSNsider

•***PiQ***, the anime/manga focused magazine that took the place of the English-language version of ***Newtype*** on ADV's publishing schedule, is coming to an end with its July issue. The publisher was unable to transition ***Newtype*** readers (who found the included DVD a strong selling point for the magazine) to ***PiQ*** (which did not include the DVD).

•TokyoPop has also announced cutbacks in their print operations.Once considered the 800-pound gorilla of the American manga publishing market, TokyoPop's sales have fallen dramatically, leading to the company's decision to reduce output by approximately 50%. The company had moved strongly into OEL (original English language) manga in the past couple of years, but most of those titles never found a strong audience with fans of Japanese manga. One TokyoPop OEL creator, *Rivkah*, has posted a blog entry saying that she believes that almost all remaining TokyoPop OEL titles will go to the web rather than seeing print. TokyoPop is reportedly working with creators who are interested in acquiring the print rights to their unpublished OEL works.

•Marvel's sending more books back to press! The list includes ***Captain Britain #2***, ***Kick-Ass #3***, ***Secret Invasion: Who Do You Trust?***, and ***Skaar: Son of Hulk #1*** (the latter will be offered with two different covers—a *Ron Garney* art cover and a movie photo cover).

•Title change: the series initially announced as ***Foolkiller: Short Time*** has been retitled ***Foolkiller: White Angels***.

•Marvel has added a 1-for-50 *John Romita Jr.* sketch variant cover edition for ***Amazing Spider-Man #568***, in stores in mid-August.

•***All Star Batman & Robin, The Boy Wonder #11*** and ***#12*** have been taken off the DC schedule; the books will be resolicited at a later date.

•The *Bernie Wrightson* short story originally slated to appear in ***House of Mystery #3*** has been replaced with a *Sean Murphy* story; the Wrightson story will appear in a later issue of the series.

•*Chuck Dixon's* many fans will hate to hear this: the veteran writer has confirmed that he has been replaced on ***Robin*** (his last issue will be #174) and ***Batman & the Outsiders*** (his last issue will be #10). His two-art ***Booster Gold*** story is still on the schedule, as his his WildStorm series ***Storming Paradise***.

•Top Cow has tapped artist *Jorge Lucas*, who stirred up a great deal of interest with his work on ***Pilot Season: Ripclaw***, to guest-illustrate two issues of ***The Darkness*** starting with #7 in August. "Jorge's art has a dark edge to it that depicts some of the seamier sides of Jackie's life perfectly," ***Darkness*** writer *Phil Hester* said. "It's a nice thematic shift too, because we're taking a break from Jackie at the height of his strength as depicted by *Michael Broussard's* lush, powerful work and contrasting it with Jackie at a low ebb as depicted by Jorge's dark, graphic style. It's a blessing to have both guys at the book's disposal."

•Former Valiant editor and writer *James Perham* passed away on May 31st after suffering a heart attack at the age of 43. "Despite his sometimes blustery exterior, Jim had a huge heart and he allowed himself to fall in love with the innovative and unique Valiant superhero universe," comic creator and former co-worker *Jeff Gomez* said. "He adored those characters and, lording it over a squad of Valiant interns, taught them to appreciate the fiction. He encouraged their own creativity, critiquing their drawings and writings, bringing the best of what he found to the attention of sometimes hard to approach editors.

"Determined to touch the canon that he so admired, Jim wrote and rewrote and eventually would land his first professional comic book work in an issue of ***Archer & Armstrong***. He would go on to do fill-in issues for other titles, but he will be best known for his hilarious and touching five-issue run on ***The Second Life of Dr. Mirage***. It would be one of the highlights of his life, perhaps topped only by his epic attempt to relaunch ***Harbinger*** under Fabian Nicieza's Acclaim Universe. Remarkably, Jim would become the very last Valiant employee..."

Coming Comics—DC in September

Superman, Batman, Wonder Woman, and their Justice League allies confront the Crime Syndicate in ***Trinity #s 14-17*** by *Kurt Busiek, Mark Bagley, & Art Thibert*... but no one anticipates what happens next! Each issue also features interrelated backup tales by *Fabian Nicieza, Scott McDaniel, Andy Owens, Mike Norton, Tom Derenick, & Wayne Faucher*.

Superheroes and politics mix in the four-part ***DC Universe: Decisions*** by *Judd Winick, Bill Willingham, & Rick Leonardo*. An unknown villain is attempting to assassinate

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the presidential candidates, and only the heroes of the DCU stand in the way. As Green Lantern, Green Arrow, Superman, Batman and more try to learn the killer's identity, they are faced with the difficult task of reconciling their own personal ideals with the mission at hand--and readers get a glimpse into some of the political philosophies of some of the DCU's best known heroes.

It's one month after the Anti-Life Equation was released worldwide. Millions now toil as slaves of Darkseid, while the Justifier shock troops of Apokolips lay waste to the planet Earth and hunt down its protectors. The remaining free humans and superheroes are stationed around the world, besieged within the walls of ten very familiar 'Watchtowers', as they fight a desperate, losing battle against the triumphant forces of evil. While Green Arrow and Black Canary attempt to deliver the secret of humanity's last hope across America's blasted wastelands, the Outsiders brave the horrors of the Bludhaven bunker in search of Batman. The ultimate battle is coming...but which heroes will become villain – and vice versa? And what part do the Secret Society have to play in the dawning of this new Age of Evil? Find out in the universe-shaking ***Final Crisis #4*** by *Grant Morrison, J.G. Jones, & Carlos*

Pacheco.

The Question... marked for death by the Spectre? How will Renee Montoya escape the wrath of the Spirit of Vengeance? And what part do Vandal Savage and Batwoman have to play in this drama? Find out in ***Final Crisis: Revelations #2*** by *Greg Rucka, Philip Tan, Jeff de los Santos, & Jonathan Glapion.*

Captain Cold and the Rogues only want one thing – revenge. But with the Secret Society hitting the Rogues where it hurts, that revenge is being kept at an arm's length. Not to mention, the subject of their revenge is now under Libra's protection. It's do or die time for the Rogues in *Geoff Johns & Scott Kolins'* ***Final Crisis: Rogues' Revenge #3***! But what does Barry Allen have to do with all of this?...

Geoff Johns & George Perez continue crafting the Crisis of the 31st Century in ***Final Crisis: Legion of 3 Worlds #2*** As Superboy-Prime leads the Legion of Super-Villains against everything and everyone inspired by the legacy of Superman, the Legion of

Super-Heroes are forced to call for help from beyond their world. Meanwhile, contingency plans are created by Brainiac 5 as he attempts to overcome Colu's devastating betrayal, Dawnstar and Wildfire pull off a startling rescue, but at a horrible cost to the universe, and Saturn Girl uncovers the source of the Legion's troubles.

Gail Simone, Nicola Scott, & Doug Hazlewood bring back ***The Secret Six*** in an all-new ongoing series that reunites Catman, Scandal, Deadshot, Ragdoll, and a a couple of surprise members as they prepare for an adventure that will take them through a gauntlet across the seediest parts of the DC Universe, ultimately pitting them against a foe more monstrous and murderous than any they've had to face.

The haunted horseman returns to the DCU in the six-part ***El Diablo*** by *Jai Nitz, Phil Hester, & Ande Parks*. Who is Chato Santana? A ruthless ganglord or a modern-day Robin Hood? Caught between the law and a power struggle in his gang, Chato meets Lazarus Lane, an impossibly old man with a possessed past.

Adam Strange Special #1, an extra-length oneshot by *Jim Starlin, Rick Leonardi, & Dan Green*, spins out of the pages of ***Rann/Thanagar: Holy War.*** After narrowly escaping a deadly blast, Adam Strange finds himself spiraling through the timestream, forced to relive the past and helpless to watch as his future unravels before his very eyes. Will he be able to pull himself together to rejoin the Holy War?

"Atlas," part 4! The grand finale of the Atlas epic finds Superman's foe seemingly victorious! With Superman down for the count, who can stand in the way of the city's supposed new ruler? Enter Krypto, (Super)man's best friend, who will do anything to protect his master. See him in action in ***Superman #680*** by *James Robinson, Renato Guedes, & José Wilson Magalhães.*

Brian Azzarello, Lee Bermejo, & Mick Gray join forces for ***Joker***, an original hardcover graphic novel that reveals an even darker and more disturbing side to the most dangerous man in Gotham. After yet another stint in Arkham Asylum, The Joker finds "his city" divided among mobsters and costumed villains. Not content to settle for a piece of the pie, The Joker vows to take back the whole city by any means necessary.

Batman & the Outsiders #11 kicks off a two-part "Batman RIP" tie-in in which the team faces its greatest crisis ever! Could the absence of the Dark Knight mean the end of the Outsiders?

To save the sanity of a kidnapped child, Batman must confront the Scarecrow in ***Detective #848*** by *Paul Dini & Dustin Nguyen*, the third part of a five-part "Batman RIP" tie-in. But their battle is just a part of Hush's plot against Batman and Bruce Wayne, setting the stage for the most shocking surprise ending of the year!

Nightwing's been shot by an assassin! How can he save the life of Harvey Dent's former lover before the killer returns to finish the job...and before he bleeds to death? Find out in *Peter J. Tomasi, Don Kramer, & Jay Leisten's* ***Nightwing #148***, a "Batman RIP" tie-in.

The repercussions from "Batman R.I.P." have shaken Robin to the core. With all his relationships fracturing and his role in the DCU thrown into turmoil, how will Tim Drake determine the best course of action for his future? Find out in ***Robin #178***, a "Batman RIP" tie-in by *Fabian Nicieza & Freddie E. Williams II.*

Alan Burnett, Paco Diaz, & Drew Geraci's "This Was Your Life, Wally West" kicks off

Continued on page 6

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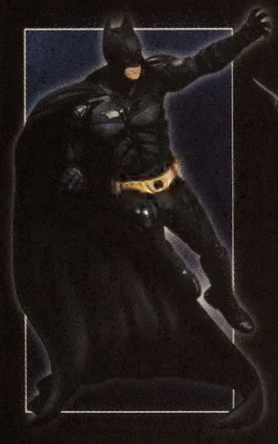
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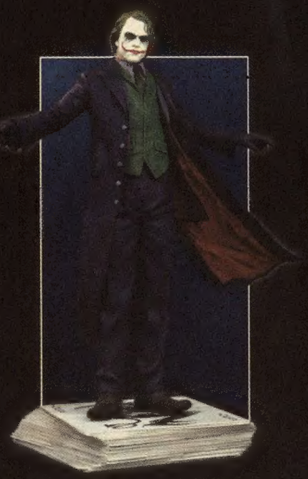
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in high gear as Flash faces a scary blast from the past in ***Flash #244***. Plus, Keystone City is abuzz over the new threat in town—a threat who just might be the finish line for the Flash!

"Secret Origin comes to an end in ***Green Lantern #35*** by *Geoff Johns, Ivan Reis, & Oclair Albert*. Witness the prelude to the Black Night unfold as the story of Hal Jordan's first adventure comes to a close! Hal and Sinestro are confronted by the Guardians over their greatest fears. Plus, Sinestro uncovers a new prophecy all his own as the stage is set for next month's "Rage of the Red Lanterns"!

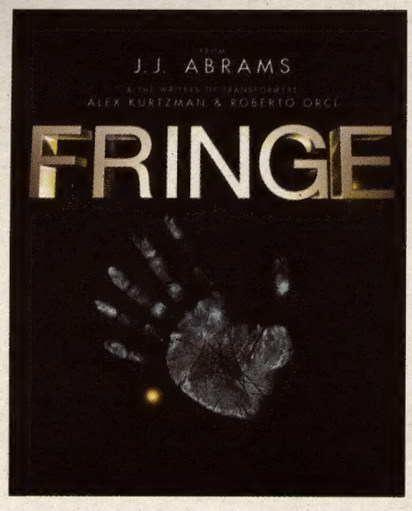
Anansi, the African spider god, begins to reshape the powers and the histories of the JLA in ***Justice League of America #25*** by *Dwayne McDuffie & Ed Benes*. An eight-year-old Bruce Wayne shoots the burglar who killed his parents; Wonder Woman retires from the JLA after the tragic death of her husband, Superman; and The Green Lantern Corps quarantines Earth after one of their number destroys an American city. With the team's history changing before Vixen's eyes, is the JLA we now know gone forever?

J.H. Williams III is the guest artist for ***Jonah Hex #35***, joining *Jimmy Palmiotti & Justin Gray* for a tale that finds Jonah Hex joining a marshall and his young wife for the strangest dinner of his life.

The Justice Society begins to dissolve as Gog vows to bring peace to Earth…in a way that frightens some and thrills others. But with Hawkman around, it's not going to be a simple debate. Plus, Starman reveals his concerns about the team's future to Mr. Terrific while Power Girl struggles to come to terms with her greatest desire in ***Justice Society of America #19*** by *Geoff Johns, Alex ross, & Dale Eaglesham*.

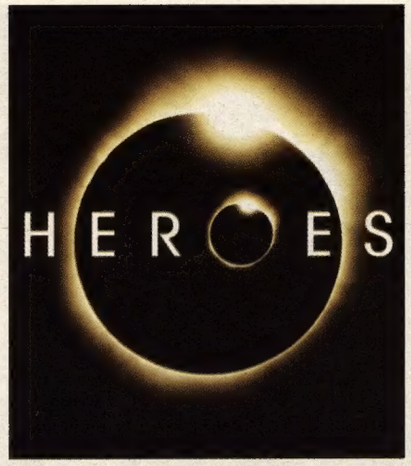
DC collected editions include:

- ***Batman Chronicles Volume 6 TP***, collecting Batman tales from ***Batman #10-11, Detective #s 62-66, & World's Finest #s 5 & 6*** in chronological order;
- ***Catwoman: Crime Pays TP***, collecting ***Catwoman #s 73-77;***
- ***Booster Gold: Blue & Gold HC***, collecting ***Booster Gold #s 0, 7-10, & 1,000,000;***
- ***Camelot 3000 Deluxe Edition HC***, marking the first hardcover appearance of the Arthurian SF epic by *Mike W. Barr, Brian Bolland, Terry Austin, Bruce Patterson, & Dick Giordano*, along with never-before-seen preliminary art by Bolland and background material by Barr;
- ***Diana Prince: Wonder Woman Volume 3 TP***, collecting ***Wonder Woman #s 190-198 & World's Finest #204;***
- ***Green Lantern: In Brightest Day TP***, collecting *Geoff Johns'* favorite Green Lantern tales, produced by *John Broome, Alan Moore, Ron Marz, Gil Kane, Dave Gibbons*, and others;
- ***Jack Kirby's the Demon Omnibus HC***, a 384-page volume collecting Kirby's entire sixteen-issue run of the mystical adventure series from the 1970s, designed to accompany the ***Kirby Fourth World Omnibus*** editions;
- ***JLA: That Was Now, This Is Then TP***, collecting the *Roger Stern-John Byrne-Mark Farmer* story arc from ***JLA Classified #s 50-54;***
- ***Jonah Hex: Luck Runs Out TP***, collecting ***Jonah Hex #s 25-30;***
- ***Justice League International Volume 3 HC***, collecting ***JLI #s 14-22;***
- ***Justice Society of America: The Next Age TP***, collecting ***Justice Society #s 1-4;***
- ***Justice Society of America: Thy Kingdom Come Book 2 HC***, collecting ***JSA #s 13-18;***
- ***Nightwing: Freefall TP***, collecting ***Nightwing #s 140-146;***
- ***The Question Volume 3: Epitaph for a Hero TP***, collecting ***The Question #s 13-18*** by *Dennis O'Neil, Denys Cowan, & Rick Magyar;*
- ***Showcase Presents World's Finest Volume 2 TP***, collecting Superman-Batman tales from ***World's Finest #s 112-145;***
- ***Showcase Presents Wonder Woman Volume 2 TP***, collecting Silver Age tales from ***Wonder Woman #s 118-137;***
- ***The Spirit: Femmes Fatale TP***, featuring 23 *Will Eisner* tales featuring P'Gell, Sand Saref, Saree, Silk Satin, Thorne Strand, Autumn Mews and many others;
- ***Superman Vs. Brainiac TP***, collecting 192 pages of Brainiac tales from the earliest days of the Silver Age to the present;
- ***Teen Titans Year One TP***, collecting the six-part miniseries; and
- ***Watchmen HC***, the first mass-market hardcover edition of the acclaimed graphic novel by *Alan Moore & Dave Gibbons*.



Wildstorm/DC

Just ahead of the series' Fox fall premiere, Wildstorm launches the comic book series ***Fringe***, based on *J.J. Abrams, Roberto Orci, & Alex Kurtzman's* new SF -suspense series. They're not revealing the creative team quite yet—but as soon as they do, you'll hear about it in ***CSN!***

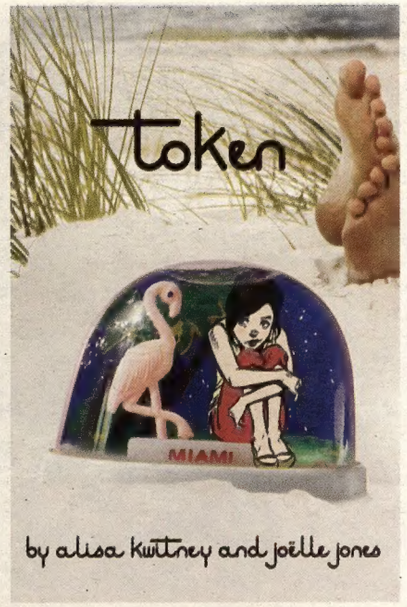


Just in time for the debut of the television series' third season, ***Heroes*** returns to comic shop racks with its second collection. ***Heroes Volume 2 HC*** features another 272 pages of tales originally presented online; contributors include *Joe Kelly, Steven T. Seagle, Duncan Rouleau, Michael Gaydos, Tom Grummett*, and many others. This book features every online chapter from Season Two, including the stories "The Ten Brides of Takezo Kensei," "The End of Hana and Drucker," and "The Golden Goose."

Mickey Neilson, Ludo Lullabi, & Tony Washington launch WildStorm's second ***World of Warcraft*** comic, a four-part limited series entitled ***Ashbringer.*** As the Lich King's plague of undeath ravages the human kingdom of Lordaeron, a mighty blade is forged from a dark orb! In the hands of Highlord Alexandros Mograine, the blade will become legend. In time, both blade and man will become . . . Ashbringer.

WildStorm collected editions include:

- ***Ex Machina Volume 7: Ex Cathedra TP***, collecting ***Ex Machina #s 30-35;***
- ***Friday the 13th Volume 2 TP***, collecting ***Pamela's Tale #s 1 & 2, Abuser & the Abused #1, Summer Vacation #s 1 & 2***, and ***Bad Land #s 1 & 2;*** and
- ***The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen: Black Dossier TP***, a softcover edition of the graphic novel by *Alan Moore & Kevin O'Neill*.



Coming Comics—Minx/DC in October

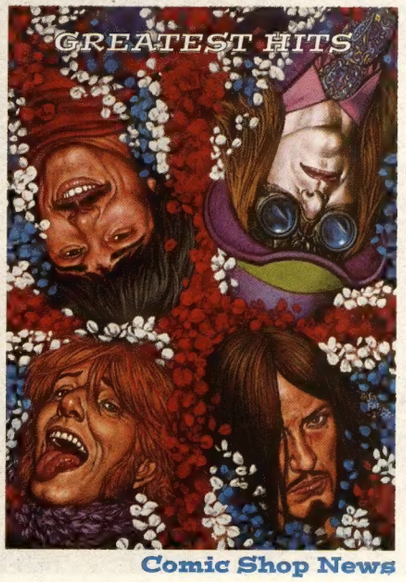
Can a Jewish girl out of time and a Spanish old soul survive culture clashes and criminal records to find true love in the sun-drenched, sequined miasma that was South Beach in the 1980s? Find the answers in ***Token***, an original graphic novel by *Alisa Kwitney & Joelle Jones*.

Coming Comics—Vertigo in September

David Tischman & Glenn Fabry invite you to sample their ***Greatest Hits*** this fall. No, they're not launching a musical career; instead, they're launching a six-issue miniseries focusing on The Mates, the greatest British super-team of all time. But who are the heroes behind the mania? How did they meet? And what's next for these heroes? You'll learn all the answers when a struggling Hollywood director focuses on the superteam's four-decades-plus career.

Mike Allred pays a visit to Fabletown, joining writer *Bill Willingham* to supply the art for ***Fables #76's*** standalone tale.

Si Spencer, Simon Gane, & Ryan Kelly bring the saga of Morrison and his friends to a dramatic conclusion in ***Vinyl Underground #12***, the conclusion to the series.



Vertigo collected editions include:

- ***Absolute Sandman Volume 4 HC***, collecting ***Sandman #s 57-75*** and a story from ***Vertigo Jam #1***, along with a heaping helping of behind-the-scenes extras, all presented in a lavishly designed slipcased package;
- ***Crossing Midnight Volume 3: The Sword in the Soul TP***, collecting ***Crossing Midnight #s 13-19;***
- ***Hellblazer: Family Man TP***, collecting ***Hellblazer #s 23-24 & 28-33;***
- ***Northlanders Volume 1: Sven the Returned TP***, collecting *Brian Wood & Davide Gianfelice's* ***Northlanders #s 1-8;***
- ***Sentences: The Life of MF Grimm TP***, a softcover edition of the memoir by *Percy Carey* with art by *Ronald Wimberly;* and
- ***Un-Men Volume 2: Children of Paradox TP***, collecting ***Un-Men #s 6-13.***

Coming Comics—CMX/DC in October

Marginal, aka *Garon Tsuchiya*, joins with artist *Syuji Takeye* for ***Astral Project Volume 1***, the kickoff volume of a supernatural series that begins with the death of a young man's sister, and the strange unlabeled CD he inherits from her.

The four-part ***Batman: Death Mask*** is collected in manga form in October.

Sanae Kana invited readers to sample his ***Classical Medley*** beginning in October. This fantasy begins when an ancient evil is unleashed on the kingdom of Classical, casting Prince Soprano, his guardian knight Alto, and his pet moondragon Mezzo in the role of Classical's saviors.

When a flying saucer crashes into his almost-empty classroom, a junior high student finds himself enlisted to help a cute alien girl capture escaped alien life forms in ***Suihelibe! Volume 1*** by *Naomi Azuma.*

Coming from DC Direct in February '09

The parade of ***Watchmen*** collectibles continues with

- ***Watchmen Movie: The Comedian 1:6 Scale Deluxe Collector Figure***
- ***Watchmen Movie: The Comedian Bust***
- ***Watchmen Movie: Dr. Manhattan Bust***, and
- ***Watchmen Movie: Action Figure Assortment Two***, featuring ***Silk Spectre (Classic), The Comedian, Dr. Manhattan, & Nite Owl (Classic).***

Kara Zor-El gets the deluxe figure treatment with the release of the ***Supergirl 1:6 Scale Deluxe Collector Figure.*** In addition to her intricate and authentically detailed outfit, Kara comes with several accessories, as well as her feline companion, Streaky the Supercat!

DC offers a pair of *Alex Ross* images in poster format in February; one features the cover art from ***Superman #675***, while the other features the Dark Knight from the cover of ***Batman #676.***

Carmine Infantino may have been unwilling to let the world see *Jack Kirby's* version of Superman back in the early 1970's, but the folks at DC Direct have no such qualms. ***Superman*** is one of four action figures featured in the Kirby-art-inspired ***New Gods Series 2 Action Figures***, which also include ***Kalibak, Big Barda,*** and ***Metron.***

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WORLD OF WARCRAFT: ASHBRINGER #1—In anticipation of the eagerly awaited game expansion, *World of Warcraft: Wrath of the Lich King*, WildStorm and Blizzard present this 4-issue miniseries telling the story of Highlord Alexandros Mograine, wielder of the magical sword...Ashbringer!

DRAGON PRINCE #1—Ron Marz and Lee Moder present *Dragon Prince*, a five-part modern fantasy mixing high fantasy elements with high flying martial arts mayhem, in a story of a teenage boy who discovers his draconic heritage!

550+ pages of cool stuff that starts shipping in September!

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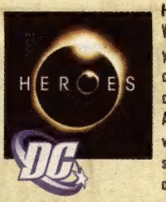
CHECK OUT THESE OFFERINGS:

Solomon Kane #1—Robert E. Howard's vengeance-obsessed puritan begins his supernatural adventures—courtesy of Scott Allie and Mario Guevara — in the haunted Black Forest of Germany in Dark Horse Comics' five-issue adaptation of Howard's "The Castle of the Devil!"



Heroes Volume 2 HC—DC Comics and Wildstorm present this sequel to last year's top-selling *Heroes* hardcover, collecting the incredibly engaging online comics based on the smash-hit, Emmy Award-nominated NBC TV series! This volume also includes artwork previously seen only on TV, and features the work of top TV and comics writers!

Back to Brooklyn #1—Garth Ennis, Jimmy Palmiotti and artist Mihailo Vukelic bring us the story of two brothers at war, all wrapped up in a special package of extreme language and hardcore violence!

Deadpool #1—Marvel Comics' "Merc with a Mouth" is back! The Skrulls have invaded, everything's gone topsy-turvy... but in Deadpool's world, that just means it's Monday! Crazy times call for crazy men, but c'mon, this guy's *insane!*

AND BE SURE NOT TO MISS:

- **Jack Kirby's New Gods Series 2 Action Figures** from DC Direct!
- **Watching the Watchmen PX HC** from Titan Books in the Comics Section!
- **Heroes Series 3 Action Figures** in the Toys Section!
- **Star Wars: Mighty Muggs PX Figures** in the Toys Section!
- **Monty Python Fluxx Card Game** in the Games Section!
- And Much, Much More!

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